

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TANAKA STATE VISIT: NE WIN'S ALLEGATION OF NON-OFFICIAL
U.S. INVOLVEMENT WITH BURMESE DISSIDENTS

REF: A) STATE 252931; B) RANGOON 3164

SUMMARY:

WE KNOW OF NO CONTINUING LINKS BETWEEN NON-OFFICIAL U.S.
CITIZENS AND ORGANIZED BURMESE DISSIDENTS, BUT OCCASIONAL
CONTACTS BETWEEN AMERICANS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF
BURMESE DISSIDENT GROUPS ARE INEVITABLE. AMERICAN
MISSIONARIES, BUSINESSMEN AND EVEN TOURISTS TRAVEL NEAR
THE BURMA BORDER. GUB ALLEGATIONS OF NON-OFFICIAL AMERICAN
INVOLVEMENT WITH BURMESE DISSIDENTS HAVE DECLINED SINCE
U NU'S DEPARTURE BUT HAVE NOT DISAPPEARED NOR WILL THEY. END
SUMMARY.

1. WE KNOW OF NO CONTINUING LINKS BETWEEN NON-OFFICIAL
U.S. CITIZENS AND ORGANIZED BURMESE POLITICAL DISSIDENT
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ELEMENTS IN THAILAND. THE EMBASSY AT MINISTRY OF

FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROMPTING, WARNED IN 1972 THOSE AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY ASSOCIATED WITH BURMESE DISSIDENT GROUPS THAT ANY FURTHER INVOLVEMENT WOULD MEAN EXPULSION FROM THAILAND. THAT WARNING AND A SPECIFIC MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ADMONISHMENT TO ONE INDIVIDUAL APPEAR TO HAVE DISSUADED THESE AMERICANS FROM CONTINUING THEIR ACTIVITIES.

2. NEVERTHELESS OCCASIONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF BURMESE DISSIDENT GROUPS ARE INEVITABLE. SEVERAL MISSIONARY FAMILIES WHO CAME TO NORTH THAILAND AFTER THEIR EXPULSION FROM BURMA CONTINUE TO WORK WITH HILLTRIBE GROUPS OF THE SAME ETHNIC ORIGINS AS THOSE IN BURMA. THESE MISSIONARIES SPEAK HILLTRIBE DIALECTS, HAVE WORKED WITH TRIBAL GROUPS FOR YEARS AND ARE NATURALLY SYMPATHETIC TO THEIR FORMER AND CURRENT FLOCKS. MINDFUL OF THEIR EXPULSION FROM BURMA, HOWEVER, THEY ARE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND CONSCIOUSLY LIMIT THEIR ACTIVITIES TO PROSELYTIZING AND EDUCATIONAL, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT WORK.

3. OTHER U.S. CITIZENS ALSO TRAVEL NEAR THE THAI-BURMESE BORDER AND MAY COME INTO CONTACT WITH BURMESE DISSIDENTS. U.S. CITIZENS ASSOCIATED WITH THE THAI ZINC COMPANY MAKE OCCASIONAL VISITS TO THE COMPANY'S OPERATION NEAR MAE SOT IN TAK PROVINCE. A RETIRED U.S. MILITARY OFFICER ASSOCIATED WITH THIS COMPANY DELIVERED THE "PROJECT TARA" PROPOSAL (BANGKOK 18216) TO THE EMBASSY, ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE RECEIVED THE DOCUMENT FROM A THAI WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE CONTACTS WITH BURMESE DISSIDENT GROUPS. THERE IS ALSO AN AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT IN MAE HONG SON PROVINCE, AND ADVENTURESOME AMERICAN TOURISTS OCCASIONALLY ROAM THE HILLS OF THAILAND'S FAR NORTH. U.S. ARMY MEDICAL PERSONNEL FROM THE SEATO MEDICAL LAB MAKE OCCASIONAL RESEARCH TRIPS NEAR THE BURMA BORDER, AFTER OBTAINING EMBASSY CLEARANCE, BUT THEY HAVE NEVER KNOWINGLY COME INTO CONTACT WITH BURMESE DISSIDENT GROUPS.

4. THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSUMPTION (REF A) IS CORRECT THAT GUB ALLEGATIONS OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT WITH BURMESE DISSIDENT

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ELEMENTS DECLINED AFTER U NU'S DEPARTURE FROM THAILAND, BUT THEY HAVE NOT ENTIRELY DISAPPEARED. AS RECENTLY AS APRIL 1974 GUB OFFICIALS TOLD MEMBERS OF THE THAI FOREIGN MINISTER'S PARTY ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO BURMA THAT THREE AMERICANS HAD TRAINED KAREN DISSIDENTS IN THE USE OF RECOILLESS RIFLES IN MAE SOT SHORTLY BEFORE THE KAREN ATTACK ON THE GUB OUTPOST AT MYAWADI (BANGKOK 6293 AND RANGOON 1078). A FORMER THAI-BASED MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY PARTY (PDP), WHO

TOOK ADVANTAGE OF A GUB AMNESTY OFFER, TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN RANGOON IN MAY 1974 THAT THE PDP HAD HIRED A FORMER U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS SERGEANT AND HAD RECEIVED \$10 MILLION FROM "AN AMERICAN LADY MULTI-MILLIONAIRE" (RANGOON 1204). GUB INTELLIGENCE SERVICES MISTOOK BRITISH TV JOURNALISTS ADRIAN COWELL AND CHRIS MENGES FOR AMERICANS IN SEPTEMBER 1973. THE THAI-BURMESE BORDER ABOUNDS WITH BURMESE INFORMANTS WHO TEND (PERHAPS TO JUSTIFY THEIR RETAINERS) TO INTERPRET THE PRESENCE OF ANY WESTERNER IN THE AREA AS EVIDENCE OF FOREIGN, ESPECIALLY AMERICAN, SUPPORT FOR THE BURMESE DISSIDENTS.

5. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS NO WAY TO REDUCE FURTHER GUB SUSPICIONS OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DISSIDENTS, AND THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PERIODIC HAND-SLAPS. WE HAVE NO FURTHER INSIGHTS AS TO WHY NE WIN BROACHED THE SUBJECT WITH TANAKA.
KINTNER

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